

Chief investigator: Dr Christine Coumarelos
Director, Research Program (NCAS)

Young peoples' understandings of domestic violence in intimate relationships

Participant information statement

(1) What is this study about?

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) is the world's longest running population-level survey of community attitudes of its kind. This research study aims to further understand the results for young people (aged 16–24) from the 2017 NCAS survey. You are invited to take part in this study about young peoples' knowledge of domestic violence in intimate partner relationships. By speaking with you, we hope to take what we learn and use the findings to inform education and primary prevention programs. This will help organisations and communities to raise further understanding of domestic violence and to help reduce domestic violence into the future.

In this study, we are asking young people aged 16–18 from a range of different backgrounds and areas to take part in group discussions.

Participation in this research study is voluntary; you do not have to take part if you don't want to. Please read the information on this statement carefully to help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

By giving your consent to take part in this study (by signing the consent form), you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read on this information statement.
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree for us to collect some personal information from you, which will be kept confidential, as described below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information, as described below.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers at Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS):

- Dr Christine Coumarelos, Director, Research Program (NCAS)

- Dr Erin Carlisle, Senior Research Officer (NCAS) and
- Kate Minter, Senior Research Officer (NCAS).

This study is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS). The Department will not receive any information from this study that could identify you.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

You will be asked to join a small group of other young people in an online focus group discussion about healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships, as well as the issue of domestic violence in Australia. You will be talking about these topics with others who are a similar age and gender to you. As well as brainstorming ideas and sharing views about relationship behaviours in the discussion group, you will be asked to share your thoughts about some statistics we will show you on domestic violence in Australia. You will also be asked to complete a short survey before attending the focus group where you will rank and explain your ideas about 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' relationship behaviours. We will ask only general questions about relationships using hypothetical scenarios and fictional characters. We will not ask you about your own relationships or specific experiences.

The group discussion will be held online via Zoom meetings. The discussion will be audio- and video-recorded. The survey will be run on SurveyGizmo. You will not be able to be identified in the study. You will be asked to give yourself a pseudonym (an alternative fictional name), which we will use in all publications resulting from the study to keep your information private.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

You will be asked to take part in the online focus group discussion for 90 minutes. The short survey, which you will be asked to complete before the online discussion, will take approximately 10 minutes. In addition to these and the time spent reading consent information, the approximate maximum time commitment of this study will be two hours.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

We will be speaking to young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years across Australia from major cities, regional and remote areas. We are looking to speak to young people from all backgrounds and experiences (e.g. cultural, racial, religious, dis/ability, financial, gender and sexuality backgrounds). Regardless of your background, we want to hear from you!

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. It is entirely up to you and your parent/guardian if you want to take part, and you do not have to take part if you don't want to. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers or anyone from Qualitative Research Australia (QRA), now or in the future.

If you decide to participate in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time by following one of the steps outlined below:

- 1) If you wish to withdraw before the group discussion, please email or call Erin or Kate (see contact details on page 4) to inform them you no longer wish to participate.
- 2) If you change your mind during the focus group discussion, please let the interviewer know.
- 3) If you change your mind after the focus group discussion has finished, please contact Erin or Kate (see contact details on page 4).

Should you withdraw after the group discussion has started (methods 2 or 3 above), it will not be possible to remove your individual comments from the audio and video recording. This is because of the group and online nature of the discussion.

If you withdraw from the study, any information that we have already collected will be kept in our study records, unless you notify Erin or Kate before we have analysed and published the results (see contact details on page 4).

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

We do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study. However, while unlikely, some participants may at points feel a bit uncomfortable given the sensitive nature of the topics under discussion. This may potentially happen when discussing ‘unhealthy’ or harmful relationship behaviours, or when discussing the statistics about domestic violence in Australia. These topics could be emotionally distressing. We have kept your comfort and wellbeing at the forefront of our research planning. We will only use hypothetical scenarios and fictional characters to generate discussion. All questions will be asked in a general way and we will not ask you about your own experiences or that of your friends and family.

As already noted at item (6), if you no longer wish to participate in the discussion because of the content or any feelings the discussion has raised, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

If any of the discussions make you worried, feel uncomfortable or raise any negative feelings for you, we encourage you to:

- **speak to the researchers** (either at the conclusion of the group discussion or later via email/telephone on the information listed on page 4) or
- **speak to a trusted adult**, such as a parent/guardian, relative or school counsellor.

If you want some extra, confidential support from trained counsellors, we encourage you to:

- **contact Kids Helpline** (available 24/7 on 1800 55 1800, or via e-chat at <https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling>) or
- **contact 1800RESPECT** (available 24/7 on 1800 737 732 or via e-chat at <https://chat.1800respect.org.au/webmodules/chat/initialinformation.aspx>).

Please note that this research will discuss violence that may include illegal activities. We will not be asking participants about their personal experience or knowledge of violence. However, if you choose to disclose specific information about criminal activity you or someone else has been involved in, the research team may be required to report that information to comply with legal requirements. You should consider this

possibility before deciding to participate in this research and the information you choose to share with researchers.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

To thank you for your time and input into the study, you will receive a \$70 e-voucher after completing the group discussion. Vouchers will only be given to those who attend the focus group discussion.

More generally, your input will be beneficial by helping to shape policy and programs to reduce domestic violence and by supporting prevention programs that work with young people.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement. All personal information that you share with us (such as your name, age and where you live [on the consent form] and your gender [on the survey]) will be kept confidential. Your information will be securely stored.

The survey and the focus group discussion will **not** collect any personal information about you. The responses that are collected in the survey are kept confidential and securely stored by both the research team, Zoom and SurveyGizmo. Zoom and SurveyGizmo encrypt all data collected. Encrypted data collected by SurveyGizmo is transferred in aggregate form to a secure server in the United States of America. By consenting to participate in this survey, participants agree to this information transfer. The audio-video meeting data collected will be stored in encrypted form in the Zoom data centre, before the data is downloaded and saved on the ANROWS server at the conclusion of each focus group. We intend to submit the audio-video recording of the group discussion to a third-party transcription service, who will also be bound by a confidentiality and privacy agreement. After the completion of the study, data will be securely archived in the ANROWS server indefinitely.

We will keep your information confidential and you will not be identified in any reports that are published from the study. There might however be an instance where we would need to break confidentiality, including if: we reasonably believe you are going to seriously harm someone else or yourself, or if we are legally required to do so. While unlikely, agreeing to participate in this study means you acknowledge this potential use of your information.

Additionally, if you are under the age of 18 and if you share something in the group discussion that suggests you might be unsafe or at risk of harm in any way, we are bound to share this and your identifying information with the applicable contacts for child protection in your State or Territory so they can help to make you safe. This is in line with child safety and protection laws in each State and Territory. For more information about mandatory child safety reporting requirements, see the Australian Institute of Family Studies ‘Mandatory Reporting Resource Sheet’ accessible via <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>).

Findings from the study will be published (e.g. in reports/papers), and you may hear about the research findings through media outlets. You will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study. However, we ask that you please help to maintain the privacy of the other members of the discussion group. Please do not share the names of the other people involved in your discussion and please do not share their stories or contributions with others.

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?

As noted at item (9) above, the results will be published. If you would like us to send you a short summary of the overall results of the study, please tick the relevant box on the consent form, and we will do so after the study is finished.

(12) What if I would like further information or want to ask questions about the study?

When you have read this information, Erin and Kate will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. The contact details for Kate, Erin and the lead researcher, Christine Coumarelos, are below.

Dr Erin Carlisle, Senior Research Officer (NCAS)	E: erin.carlisle@anrows.org.au Ph: 02 8374 4011
Kate Minter, Senior Research Officer (NCAS)	E: kate.minter@anrows.org.au Ph: 02 8374 4029
Dr Christine Coumarelos, Director, Research Program (NCAS)	Email: christine.coumarelos@anrows.org.au Phone: 02 8374 4088

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [Approval reference number: 2020/444]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information statement is for you to keep.